the Ladder

AUGUST

FIFTY CENTS

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications---this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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EDITORIAL

Officialdom's Logic

WITH THE SAME LOGIC HE DISPLAYED DURING AND AFTER LAST YEAR'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN, MAYOR GEORGE CHRISTOPHER CAME TO GRIPS WITH THE "GAY BAR" SCANDALS IN SAN FRANCISCO. HE CALLED FOR A TOP-LEVEL MEETING OF CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS TO COORDINATE PLANS FOR CRACKING DOWN ON BARS FREQUENTED BY HOMOSEXUALS. THE HONORABLE MAYOR'S CONCERN WAS THE INDICTMENT OF SEVEN POLICEMEN FOR BRIBERY - AND OBVIOUSLY, TO HIM, THE VICTIM WAS THE GUILTY PARTY. FOR HE REASONED, AND QUITE LOGICALLY, THAT IF GAY BARS ARE ELIMINATED, TEMPTATION TO THE POLICE TO HARRASS THESE ESTABLISHMENTS AND TO TAKE PAYOFFS WILL ALSO BE ERASED.

HOWEVER, THE MAN WHO LAST YEAR COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO MENTION THAT EVIL WORD EVEN THOUGH HIS POLITICAL OPPONENT HAD ATTACKED HIM ON THE GROUNDS THAT "ORGANIZED HOMOSEXUALS" WERE FLOURISHING BENEATH HIS NOSE, STILL CANNOT FACE THE ISSUE SQUARELY.

WE ADMIRED MAYOR CHRISTOPHER WHEN HE FACED THE PROBLEM OF CRIME IN THE FILLMORE DISTRICT BY CALLING A MEETING OF POLICE AUTHORITIES AND NEGRO LEADERS OF THAT COMMUNITY TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. WE ADMIRED MAYOR CHRISTOPHER TOO WHEN HE FACED THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY BY CALLING A SIMILAR SESSION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND JUVENILE GANG LEADERS. BUT OUR ADMIRATION DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE "GAY BAR" SITUATION IS BEING HANDLED. HOW CAN ANY DISCUSSION OF THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM REAP ANY CONCRETE RESULTS WITHOUT REPRESENTATION FROM THE BAR MANAGEMENT OR THE HOMOSEXUAL MINORITY ITSELF?

AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT TO HIS HONOR THROUGH SCREAMING HEADLINES, THERE EXISTS IN HIS CITY TWO ORGANIZATIONS WHO ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE HOMOSEXUAL MINORITY AND ITS RELATION TO SOCIETY - THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS AND THE MATTACHINE

SOCIETY. BOTH ORGANIZATIONS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH CIVIC OFFICIALS; BOTH HAVE BEEN REJECTED.

RATHER THE OFFICIALS SAY THEY WILL DEVISE STRICTER MEASURES TO DEAL WITH "GAY BARS" - EVEN THOUGH STATE LAW PERMITS HOMOSEXUALS TO GATHER IN PUBLIC PLACES. WE ASK THEN DO THEY WISH TO ENFORCE THE LAW OR BREAK IT? WE SOMETIMES FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO DIFFERENTIATE.

TO TRY TO PIN DOWN THESE OFFICIALS AS TO JUST WHAT IT IS ABOUT THESE BARS THEY OBJECT TO IS QUITE A FEAT - THE REASON OBVIOUSLY BEING JUST BECAUSE OF THE GROUP THEY CATER TO. AND IF THE LAW THWARTS THEM IN THEIR EFFORTS TO WIPE THEM OUT, THEY'LL FIND SOME LOOPHOLE OR "DEVISE" NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CODE.

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER HAS BEST BEEN EXPRESSED IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE:

"GENERALLY SPEAKING, ALL OF THESE BARS ARE RUN QUIETLY AND WITHOUT TROUBLE OR BRAWLING. IF THEY WERE TO BE CLOSED SOLELY BECAUSE THEY ARE MEETING PLACES FOR HOMOSEXUALS, THE POLICE WOULD FIND HOMOSEXUALS CRUISING THE STREETS, THE PARKS AND VARIOUS OTHER PUBLIC PLACES. FOR CLOSING THE BARS OF THIS TYPE WILL MOST ASSUREDLY NOT END THE PROBLEM . . . BUT WORSEN IT IN MY ESTIMATION.

"HOMOSEXUALITY IS HERE TO STAY, WHETHER THE POLICE LIKE IT OR NOT, AND IT WOULD SEEM THAT IF SUCH BARS WERE TOLERATED, WHERE A MODICUM OF INSPECTION COULD BE MAINTAINED BY THE POLICE, IT WOULD BE FAR PREFERABLE TO HAVING THESE PEOPLE MAKING MORE PUBLIC CONTACTS.

"IN MY ESTIMATION IT IS TIME PEOPLE WOKE UP TO THE FACTS OF LIFE AND ADMITTED THAT HOMOSEXUALITY, AS KINSEY HAS PROVEN, IS A REALITY WITH A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL WISHES IT SO OR NOT." - DEL MARTIN

MAYOR CHRISTOPHER MADE THE HEADLINES AGAIN RECENTLY WHEN HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM J. C. RUSSELL, CITIZEN, WHO PROPOSED A CITY TAX LEVIED AGAINST THOSE WEARING SHORTS AND SLACKS. RUSSELL FIGURED A PROPER CHARGE FOR LADIES WOULD BE $5 UP TO 125 LBS.; $10 BETWEEN 125 AND 150 LBS.; AND $50 FROM 150 LBS. UP. MEN IN BERMUDAS WOULD PAY MORE - A FLAT $100. THE MAYOR'S COMMENT: "YOU CAN'T TAX THEM, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS PASS AN ORDINANCE."

An Evening's Reading

CAROL IN A THOUSAND CITIES BY ANN ALDRICH.
FAWCETT, GOLD MEDAL, 1960. #D1009. $.50

A REVIEW BY GENE DAVON

NO OTHER WRITER ON LESBIANISM TODAY IS SO WIDELY DISCUSSED, HEATEDLY BERATED AND ARDENTLY DEFENDED AS MISS ANN ALDRICH. FEW OTHER LESBIANS HAVE AS UNFAIRLY TREATED THEIR FELLOW LESBIANS. NOW IN HER THIRD BOOK UNDER THIS PSEUDONYM, MISS ALDRICH HAS TAKEN A NEW TACK WITH VERY DIFFERENT RESULTS. THIS IS HER BEST CONTRIBUTION TO DATE, AND I SAY THIS IN ALL SINCERITY, DESPITE THE FACT THAT SHE HAS UNJUSTLY AND UNFAIRLY CRITICIZED THE LADDER AND THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS. TO BE SURE, THIS IS HER BEST CONTRIBUTION BECAUSE SHE HAS RETIRED TO THE POSITION OF EDITOR. MOST OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK ARE BY DISTINGUISHED NOVELISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS.

THE BOOK BEGINS WITH LENGTHY EXCERPTS FROM THE ILLUSIONIST BY FRANCOISE MALLET, THE HEARTH AND THE STRANGENESS BY N. MARTIN KRAMER (BEATRICE SRIGHT), THE PRICE OF SALT BY CLAIRE MORGAN (PATRICIA HIGHSMITH), AND THE SHORT STORY, PAUL'S MISTRESS, BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT. FOLLOWING THESE IS AN ORIGINAL SHORT STORY BY AN UNDISCLOSED AUTHOR. TWO OF THESE FIVE PIECES ARE SYMPATHETIC; ALL ARE ARTISTIC.

THE SECOND SECTION IS ON PSYCHOLOGY. IT INCLUDES UNBIASED COMMENTS FROM SIGMUND FREUD, SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR AND CLARA THOMPSON.

THE THIRD SECTION BEGINS WITH SOME OF THE POOREST PARTS OF MISS ALDRICH'S SECOND BOOK, WE TOO MUST LOVE (FAWCETT, 1958). THIS IS FOLLOWED BY AN ANONYMOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SECTION BY A WELL ADJUSTED, EXCEEDINGLY HAPPY LESBIAN. THIS SHORT PIECE IS WELL CONSTRUCTED AND IS ALONE WELL WORTH THE PRICE OF THE BOOK.

THEN COMES THE PART I ADMITTEDLY FIND HARD TO REVIEW OBJECTIVELY, FOR IT CONCERNS MISS ALDRICH'S REACTION TO THE

LADDER. With her witty knife ever in hand, she slashes to ribbons every story without exception that appeared in THE LADDER during the year 1958.(including two written by this reviewer). She laughs out loud at Del Martin's defense of Phyllis Lyon in the article, "Is Our Editor Burly?" She misinterprets the letter written by a mother concerning her daughter's happy, constructive Lesbian relationship. I say this with some measure of authority, for my mother wrote the article in question. Miss Aldrich bluntly loathes THE LADDER and she goes out of her way to make it very clear.

The last chapter is a selection of letters ostensibly written by Lesbians to Miss Aldrich praising her as a "beacon on a dark night."

In sum total the book is about half for and half against Lesbianism, with the editor surprisingly on the against side. One wonders how Miss Aldrich feels way up there judging and defiling her people.

Ann of 10,000 Words Plus

I have just had such a hilarious hour with Ann Aldrich's CAROL IN A THOUSAND CITIES that I must try to share the fun. I am not laughing at the well selected anthology of fiction and psychiatry. That I didn't read because the originals are on my shelves, and believe me, to get even parts of them on anyone's for 50 cents is the bargain of the year. (Adv. - and free!)

No, it's the introduction, and the things "written especially for this volume," and the letters in "Please Listen to Me," and the naively spiteful (and sometimes inaccurate) chapter on THE LADDER that have me hopping with the glee of a puzzle solver. Because whatever her pretense, Miss (or Mrs.?) Aldrich wrote every word of them - or edited with such vigor that they are all unmistakably from one pen. This tempts one irresistibly into Literary Sleuthing, that game played so thrillingly by real 'buffs' in highbrow quarterlies. And this game

is not without bearing on her needling of THE LADDER, much of which was aimed at the fiction.

Miss Aldrich doesn't admit to writing fiction herself. Even if her three volumes on gay life in NYC read a good deal like it, they are sufficiently literal reportage to have got her boycotted by several gay bars in that city - the patrons don't care to be used as copy. However, it's a matter of general knowledge that she is also Vin Packer, who has written above a dozen Gold Medal paper-back originals, perhaps a quarter of them known to me. What these reveal is superlative early training in Writing to Sell, and something like diarrhea of the pen. She can take anything from campus panty raids to juvenile delinquents to St. Malo resorters, and rip off something to keep one's eyes on the page for half an evening - and, I suspect, put enough coins in the piggy bank to live better in NYC than I could. (So this is sour grapes?)

Now, by a "literary explicator's" comparison of style, background, names, allusions, etc., one may in addition infer beyond reasonable doubt that she is also Ann Bannon, parent of the Laura-Beth series: ODD GIRL OUT, I AM A WOMAN, WOMEN IN THE SHADOWS, and JOURNEY TO A WOMAN. (Don't all these WOMEN mean something, Dr. Freud?)

So what? Well, 1) the gal is so acrobatically slick that the pore li'l amateur short-shorts for THE LADDER seem pretty rough-hewn to her. (Be comforted. The best comp teacher I ever knew said: "Anybody can say something in 1000 words. When you can say it in 100 you'll be there.") However, for psychological reasons she attacks the matter, not the manner. Why? 2) Purely hypothetical but plausible: Packer's SPRING FIRE and Bannon's quartet are fruits of some young but searing experience(s?) which somebody has had to write out of her system. Then she got herself psyched - or maybe employed Horney's "self-analysis" - and decided to Grow Out of It. Saw a lot of life at first hand and paid her way by using it as fictional copy. Also doubtless got plenty of chances to quit being "emotionally arrested" in the Freudian sense. Whether she took them or how

well she liked them you can jolly well read and guess for yourself. I'm not going to court!

OK now, Mature Girl and Professional Writer. Where did you acquire the notion that fiction should Teach a Lesson? Isn't THE LADDER published primarily for Lesbians? Why should every story in it preach the philosophy of DOB or anyone else? Why carp at DOB's following this century's trend to picture Things as They Are? or even occasionally last century's Things as We Wish They Were? Do all your stories bear a Message?

...Well, maybe not. But the total score of titles strips someone a bit bare, and for my money someone's not sure just who she is. People Who Live in Glass Houses Should Undress in the Dark.

Jeannette H. Foster

We're Flattered, Miss Aldrich!

We didn't think you cared. For it has been two years (April, 1958) since we published our "Open Letter to Ann Aldrich" in THE LADDER.

It is indeed flattering to note that you felt us important enough in the field of Lesbianism to devote so much time in writing your reply, to say nothing of the space allotted us in CAROL IN A THOUSAND CITIES. We are always pleased to learn that our magazine is so thoroughly read. For you have certainly wrung out THE LADDER - "Rung by Rung."

But as we pointed out in our "open Letter", you have a tendency to center your attention on the "bizarre." And we must admit that it does make good copy! We further admit that THE LADDER is not professional - we're sure that there were many more blunders in the 1958 issues which you graciously overlooked.

However, just as we indicated in our infamous "Open Let-

ter" that you had not given the Lesbian a fair hearing in WE WALK ALONE and WE TOO MUST LOVE, we feel that you have not given THE LADDER a fair hearing in CAROL. While you were unable to find anything at all of merit in a full year's gratis subscription (we found it only fair to advise you of what was being said about your works), another author found material in the September and October issues worth quoting. We refer to Attorney Morris Lowenthal, who quoted from "Open Letter to Assemblyman John A. O'Connell," "Crime Story," and the report on the Mattachine Society's New York Convention in his brief presented to the California Appellate Court in the Vallerga case.

We are not great, Miss Aldrich, but we are also not as ridiculous as you would make us out. For anyone can take a piece, quote from it out of context and come up with inferences that were not in the original.

So you've had a ball, Miss Aldrich, at our expense. And nonetheless we're flattered. For as Miss Damon points out in her review of CAROL, this is your best book to date. And we're happy to have been included - realizing, of course, that any praise of our organization and its efforts could easily have led to some blue-pencil editing by your publisher. As you would put it, "It's better to have been mentioned disparagingly than never to have been mentioned at all" by A.A. - the Herb Caen of the homophile publishing world.

We are flattered too, Miss Aldrich, because you took our advice. You included in this latest volume "A Happy Life, A Constructive Life." And we admire you too, Miss Aldrich, for letting the last two sentences stand:

"Eight years ago I would have thought it rather incongruous to add the words 'a happy' Lesbian. But despite my own adolescent doubts and fears, despite the thousand and one unhappy Lesbian novels and plays, and despite the Ann Aldrich exposes, believe me, - there are such things...."

-Del Martin

Copies of CAROL IN A THOUSAND CITIES are available from the DOB Book Service - as are all of the 1958 issues including April's "Open Letter to Ann Aldrich." See pg. 21.

ONE Symposium

As part of this year's seminar series, the Mattachine Society is presenting a series of lectures and a panel program by the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies in San Francisco from August 12 to September 2. These will be held in the Society's offices at 693 Mission Street on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons as scheduled:

Friday, August 12, 8 - 10 p. m. - THE CAUSE OF SEX DEVIATION: A FRANK LOOK AT FREUD - James Kepner

Saturday, August 13, 2 - 4 p. m. - THE HOMOSEXUAL INFLUENCE IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY - James Kepner

Friday, August 19, 8 - 10 p. m. - THE SATYRICON OF PETRONIUS: Masterpiece of Debauchery - D. Slater

Saturday, August 20, 2 - 4 p. m. - JAMES BARR: AMATEUR PROPAGANDIST - D. Slater

Friday, August 26, 8 - 10 p. m. - HOMOSEXUALITY, CRIME AND SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION - W. Dorr Legg

Saturday, August 27, 2 - 4 p. m. - REPRESSION, BISEXUALITY & MARRIAGE: Ways of Escape - W. Dorr Legg

Friday, September 2, 7 - 8:30 p. m. - DO HOMOPHILE STUDIES HAVE ANY PRACTICAL VALUE? - Panel discussion conducted by ONE Institute faculty members

Advance registration is urged. Fees for the complete series will be $10; any three events, $5; single lectures, $2. Registration should be made with the Mattachine Society, 693 Mission St., San Francisco 5, Cal.

ONE Institute of Homophile Studies was first brought to San Francisco under the auspices of the Daughters of Bilitis in November, 1957. The new series should prove as provocative. A great deal of research has been undertaken by ONE's faculty.

In Defense of 'Defense'

At the DOB convention and elsewhere, Dr. Leo J. Zeff has counseled the Lesbian to forego self-justification before society. This is food for thought to the zealous, and useful advice to the anxiety-ridden. Should it be taken literally? I wish to argue, with the utmost respect and appreciation for Dr. Zeff's wisdom, insight and warmth, that it should not be so taken.

All of life is a delicate balance between the personal and social. To survive we need a thick enough skin to ward off the slings and arrows that come daily to each of us in some form. Without a minimum of tough-minded disregard for the opinions of others, life would not be tolerable for the heterosexual or the homosexual.

But is this enough to make life tolerable? It is a great deal, granted - and a goal not yet reached by all of us. Yet for some, all the while that we seek to reach personal goals, we feel in some sense a part of that society which condemns us. (Yes, by and large it still does so, despite the DOB convention and other homophile seminars, and we would be deluding ourselves if we thought otherwise.)

Those of whom I speak have imbibed from early youth a feeling for their society and its strivings, a certain reverence for the best it has done, thought and said, and a desire to keep up its work. However misguided and evil men and women have been, they have also sought truth and beauty.

The cream of what mankind has gathered in its generations of seeking is stored up in its learning, its art, its science - its culture and high traditions. This is not only worth caring about, it is worth improving upon - and this requires the efforts of each one who is able. Can we be a member of a society and not care what it says? Once inoculated with social awareness, the virus remains, though it may lead to struggle. The struggle may broaden and enlighten both us and the society we are part of.

Is this naive? All desire for reform is naive, yet some of it bears fruit. Is it presumptuous? No, for the homosexual is part of mankind, and has already contributed much to it - and his desire to have this fact recognized cannot therefore be presuming.

Is it "defensive"? Undoubtedly so - which need not be an epithet. Why should not those who have been attacked by society defend themselves before society if they care at all about society and themselves? And perhaps even deeper than the care about society - but tied up with it inextricably - is a care about the truth. Men will argue for a long time about the morality of homosexuality, or about its causation; but there are certain elementary truths about homosexuals which are not known to the majority: who homosexuals are, what they are really like, that they are often decent, useful citizens, and so on. To care to see the truth brought out into the open may serve the purpose of self-justification, but it is more than that; it is a concern with something larger.

Inner peace may indeed require a partial withdrawal from what the world says and thinks. But if such a withdrawal is complete, then there is no larger concern or responsibility. And the homosexual must either shut himself up in his own "gay" world, or he must be content to move in the outside world in disguise forever. This is a plea for involvement, and not withdrawal.

Florence Conrad

British Reject Homosexual Law

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RECENTLY REJECTED AGAIN A BID TO MAKE PRIVATE HOMOSEXUAL ACTS BY CONSENTING ADULTS LEGAL. LABORITE KENNETH ROBINSON ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 1957 WOLFENDEN COMMITTEE ON VICE, SUGGESTING THAT HOMOSEXUAL ACTS IN PRIVATE BETWEEN CONSENTING ADULTS NO LONGER BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE. THE LAWMAKERS VOTED 213 TO 99 AGAINST CHANGING THE LAW.

mood miscellanea

SLENDER HANDS SNAP THE STEMS,
WHILE WET TIPPED WAXY BLOOMS
DROOP AGAINST YOUR HAIR
ALL FALLING 'ROUND.

INCOMPARABLE LOVELINESS:
CAMELLIAS AND YOUR FACE.

WE SHUT THE DOOR
IT MADE SUCH A SMALL SOUND:
THAT . . . CLICK OF THE LOCK
WHICH FINALITY SPLINTERED INTO TEARS.

LIKE THE SONG OF A BIRD AT NIGHT
YOUR HANDS ARE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN ROSES.

WE KISS
IN SENSES, ODOURS, COLOURS
OF FORGOTTEN FLOWERS
I RUN, I LEAP, I DROWN!

- A. JOANNE CONNORS

The Other Side of the Fable

BY JAN FRASER

YOU WHO LIVE IN THAT HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND - YOU THINK YOUR LOT IS HARD? WHAT OF US IN THE DARK WORLD WHO LOVE YOU? WHAT OF US, DOUBLY CURSED, WHO HOLD OUT OUR ARMS IN LONGING WHEN YOU RETURN TO THE SUNSHINE?

I, WHO HAD A DREAM, AM ONE OF THEM. I DREAMED OF A HOME, A HOME WITH SOMEONE TO LOVE, TO LIVE WITH ALL THE YEARS OF MY LIFE. I SEARCHED THROUGH THIS SOMETIMES DARK WORLD. AND ONCE, WHEN I HAD NEARLY GIVEN UP, THE MOON SHONE ON THIS WORLD; AND I FOUND YOU.

FOR A WHILE MY WORLD WAS LIT BY YOUR PRESENCE. WHERE YOU WENT THOSE TIMES WHEN YOU LEFT, I DID NOT KNOW. WHAT YOUR OTHER LIFE WAS LIKE? I DID NOT CARE, FOR I THOUGHT SOON OUR LIVES WOULD BE ONE.

BUT NOW I DO KNOW, AND NOW I CARE. AND I KNOW THAT I AM DOUBLY CURSED. FOR YOU GO TO THE HOUSE IN THE FORBIDDEN SUNLIT LAND. I CANNOT COME WITH YOU. INDEED, I HAVE NO WISH TO. I WISH ONLY TO HAVE YOU HERE ALWAYS.

AT FIRST I RAILED AGAINST THAT LIFE. I URGED; I PLEADED. NOW I SAY NOTHING, FOR I SEE YOUR ANGUISH; AND I KNOW THAT IT IS AS GREAT AS MINE.

BUT YOU MUST NOT THINK IT IS EASY. WHEN, AFTER A FEW HOURS OF HAPPINESS, YOU ARISE TO GO TO YOUR CHILD, YOUR HUSBAND IN THE OTHER LAND, YOU MUST NOT THINK I LET YOU GO EASILY. I WANT TO CRY OUT, "STAY WITH ME! GIVE UP THE LIFE IN THE SUNLIGHT. STAY HERE. FORGET THOSE OUT THERE." AND THEN I HEAR A CHILD'S VOICE. SO I DO NOT SAY THE WORDS.

I WANT TO CRY OUT, "STAY WITH ME!" AND I SEE A SHADOWY FORM, A MAN, BEWILDERED BY WHAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND, HURT BY A WOMAN HE LOVED AND SHELTERED. AND I DO NOT SAY THE WORDS.

AND MANY TIMES AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT, I SIT IN THE DARK AND THINK, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, TO ACCEPT. WHAT EVIL GODDESS LOOKED UPON ME AT BIRTH, DOOMED ME NOT ONLY TO THIS TWILIGHT WORLD, BUT TO THE LOVE OF ONE STRANGE TO IT? I LOOK DOWN THE ROAD OF THE FUTURE, AND I ACHE FOR YOUR HAND FOREVER IN MINE.

OTHERS WHO HAVE WALKED THIS ROAD BEFORE ME TELL ME THE WAY OUT. THEY COUNSEL, "GIVE HER UP. SHE IS NOT TRULY OF US. DO NOT LET YOUR LIFE BE TORN INTO BITS BY THIS WOMAN, THIS OUTLAW, HERE FOR A FEW HOURS OF FORBIDDEN PLEASURE." AND I HAVE TRIED. TRIED AND FAILED, FOR I LOVE YOU.

EACH TIME YOU LEAVE MY ARMS, THE KNIFE OF DOUBT TWISTS IN MY HEART. WILL YOU RETURN? OR WILL MY WORLD SEEM DARKER, LESS REAL EACH TIME YOU LEAVE IT? WILL A TIME COME WHEN YOU BREAK THE FRAGILE TIE BETWEEN US FOREVER? SOMETIMES WHEN I SEE YOUR THOUGHTS TURN TO THE OTHER WORLD, I WONDER, "WHY HAVE YOU COME? WHAT DESIRES BRING YOU HERE TO TORTURE BOTH OF US?" AND THERE ARE NO ANSWERS. JUST TWO VOICES: MINE - AND A CHILD'S.

* * * * *

WE HAVE PRESENTED "THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FABLE" AS A COROLLARY TO "THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND" BY MIRIAM GARDNER, WHICH APPEARED IN THE MAY, 1960 ISSUE OF THE LADDER. WE WISH ALSO TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO READERS RESPOND (PAGE 26) AND "LETTER TO MEREDITH" BY JODY SHOTWELL WHICH FOLLOWS ON PAGE 17.

THERE IS ALL TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE "MARRIED" LESBIAN, AND IT IS APPARENT THE SUBJECT NEEDS SOME AIRING. FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS OR COMMENT WILL BE WELCOME. -EDITOR

* * * * *

TO A GIRL WITH SIX CATS

I LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES SO BLUE
AND FELT AT LAST MY LOVE WAS TRUE.
NOW, MY DEAR, I FIND THAT I
CAN LIVE WITH YOU BUT NOT YOUR ZOO.

MORGEN FITZGERALD

Letter to Meredith

RECENTLY IN THE LADDER THERE APPEARED A PIECE DEALING WITH A PROBLEM THAT HAS CAUSED A KIND OF SUBTLE "COLD WAR" BETWEEN YOU AND ME. THE GENERAL THEME IS BI-SEXUALITY, AND THE SPECIFIC ONE, THE CASE OF THE HETEROSEXUALLY MARRIED LESBIAN.

I ADDRESS THIS LETTER TO YOU, MEREDITH, IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL EVOKE A REBUTTAL, TO BRING INTO THE OPEN THOSE FEELINGS WHICH THUS FAR HAVE BEEN MANIFESTED ONLY BY STRANGELY SUBJECTIVE CRITICISM.

AS A CLEAR AND DECISIVE THINKER, YOU WILL HAVE TO ADMIT THAT YOU CANNOT NEGATE THE FACT OF BI-SEXUALITY BY CRITICIZING IT. IT EXISTS. AND SO ALSO EXIST THE MANY WOMEN WHO, BECAUSE OF SOME SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, ENTERED INTO A HETEROSEXUAL MARRIAGE EITHER IN SPITE OF OR BECAUSE OF THEIR HOMOSEXUAL INCLINATIONS. THE SITUATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AS VARIED AS ARE THE PEOPLE WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN THIS PARTICULAR PREDICAMENT.

I HARDLY NEED ASSURE YOU, MEREDITH, THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN YOUR CONDEMNATION. I DARESAY THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF HOMOSEXUALS WHO CENSURE THE BI-SEXUAL IS AS GREAT AS THE NUMBER OF HETEROSEXUALS WHO DENOUNCE THE HOMOSEXUAL. YET, THE HOMOSEXUAL, WHO WOULD WISH FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNITION OF HIS NATURE, IS OFTEN THE MOST VEHEMENT IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE BI-SEXUAL.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARGUMENTS IN OUR CRUSADE FOR FAIR AND JUST LEGISLATION FOR THE HOMOSEXUAL IS THE MATTER OF COMPLETE SEXUAL FREEDOM BETWEEN CONSENTING ADULTS. YOU, MEREDITH, AS A TIRELESS WORKER FOR THIS EVENTUALITY, MUST CONCEDE THAT, IN ORDER FOR SUCH LEGISLATION TO COME ABOUT, RELIGIOUS DICTUM REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY HAS TO BE DISREGARDED. AND SINCE MORAL LAW, AS WE KNOW IT, IS BASED UPON RELIGIOUS DICTUM, THIS TOO MUST BE TAKEN OUT OF THE REALM OF LEGISLATION AND RELEGATED TO WHERE IT BELONGS... WITHIN THE CONSCIENCE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL. IF YOU GRANT THIS... AND I DO NOT SEE HOW YOU CAN FAIL TO DO SO... THEN IT IS NOT FOR YOU, OR FOR ANYONE, TO FROWN UPON WHATEVER ADJUSTMENT THE BI-SEXUAL MAKES WITHIN HER OWN PARTICULAR SITUATION.

Miriam Gardner and Jan Fraser have presented clearly the dilemma in which the married Lesbian finds herself. You must admit that the problems are serious, heartbreaking and unsolvable enough, without the additional burden of unacceptance by those who should be the first to understand and accept.

Perhaps you will argue, Meredith, that you do not condemn the married Lesbian per se...but only the manner in which she conducts her life. You insist upon the reaching of a decision, of a choice, irrevocable, between homosexuality and heterosexuality. And once that choice is made, you expect the other aspect of the bi-sexual's nature to disappear...or, at least, to be pushed down forever out of sight.

It is not that simple. Nothing involving our basic nature is that simple. We may try...and we may succeed...for a while...but sooner or later there will be an eruption. I won't venture here into the matter of the psychology of suppression or repression of fundamental urges...or into the possible outlets or sublimations which may take place in the effort of the bi-sexual to solve his problem. This is a field for a more professional and authoritative voice than mine.

I can only add my plea to that of the many others who must bear this bitter burden...that you grant us your sympathy, your understanding, and your friendship.

Sincerely,

JODY SHOTWELL

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LESBIANA

BY GENE DAMON

146. REBEL WOMAN BY HARRY WHITTINGTON. AVON, 1960. AVON BOOKS DIVISION, HEARST CORPORATION, 959 EIGHTH AVE., NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK. $.35.

UNUSUAL SETTING--CUBA DURING THE CASTRO REVOLUTION--AND GOOD WRITING MARK THIS AS A MUST. STORY IS BASICALLY A SPY THRILLER BUT THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL LESBIAN INTEREST. CAPTAIN MIRTHA ROSALES AND HER SOLDIER GIRLFRIEND, DOLORES, AND THEIR ADVENTURES ARE TOLD ABOUT AGAINST A WAR-TORN BACKGROUND. FAST PACE, PLEASANT EVENING.

147. MARIANNE BY FREDERIC MULLALLY. VIKING, 1960. VIKING PRESS, 625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK. $3.95.

A YOUNG MAN WEEPING AT A PARTY OVER THE NOW-DEAD MARIANNE. A BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING FRENCH LESBIAN PROFESSING LOVE FOREVER EVEN THOUGH SHE MUST ALWAYS WEAR DARK GLASSES AS A CONSEQUENCE OF HER LOVE FOR MARIANNE. A NOTED ARTIST DYING OF A HEART ATTACK AFTER LOSING MARIANNE. FRANKY, THE EXOTIC NEGRO WOMAN WHO ROOMED(?) WITH MARIANNE. THE CANADIAN WOMAN WRITER WHO DIDN'T KNOW MARIANNE WAS DEAD. THE JOURNALIST WHO FOLLOWED THE TRAIL AND FOUND THEM ALL AND OTHERS WITH JUST ONE THING IN COMMON: LOVE FOR MARIANNE.

148. JUSTINE. BALTHAZAR. MOUNTOLIVE. CLEA. BY LAWRENCE DURRELL. DUTTON PRESS, NEW YORK, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960.

THESE FOUR NOVELS COMPRISE THE "ALEXANDRIA QUARTET" AND DEAL PRIMARILY WITH ALL KINDS OF EMOTIONAL LOVE. WHAT SETS THEM APART FROM THE MERE NOVEL OF TODAY IS THE QUALITY OF THE WRITING AND THE DEPTH OF THE ANALYSIS EMPLOYED. ANY ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE PLOT INTO A NEAT ANNOTATION WOULD BE LUDICROUS, BUT READERS OF THIS COLUMN WILL BE INTERESTED

IN FOLLOWING THE STORY OF THE AFFAIR BETWEEN JUSTINE AND CLEA. THERE ARE COUNTLESS RETELLINGS OF MANY HOMOSEXUAL AND LESBIAN SEQUENCES. FOR THE SERIOUS READER.

149. THE NIGHT OF THE HIGH WIND BY JOANNA CATLOW. LONDON, HUTCHINSON, 1960. (AVAILABLE THROUGH VILLAGE THEATRE CENTER, 116 CHRISTOPHER ST., NEW YORK 14, NEW YORK.)

HEAVILY PLOTTED, TYPICALLY ENGLISH NOVEL ABOUT THE CRUEL DECEPTION A YOUNG GIRL PLAYS ON A NICE LESBIAN. CHRISTABEL, IN ORDER TO HELP HER YOUNGER SISTER, NINA, PRETENDS TO BE IN LOVE WITH MARGOT--JUST LONG ENOUGH TO WRECK EVERYONE'S LIFE. THE LESBIAN, MARGOT, IS WELL DRAWN IN A MANNER REMINISCENT OF STEPHEN GORDON IN THE WELL OF LONELINESS. RECOMMENDED.

150. SHE CAME TO STAY BY SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR. WORLD PRESS, CLEVELAND, 1954.

EXISTENTIALIST NOVEL ABOUT A TRIANGLE. PIERRE AND FRANCOISE ARE LOVERS, BUT FRANCOISE HAS A STRONG LESBIAN BIAS. SHE BECOMES ENAMORED OF XAVIERE AND INVITES HER TO LIVE WITH HER. THE RESULTING ENTANGLEMENT ENDS WITH THE MURDER OF XAVIERE. NEVER LAPSING INTO THE LURID OR THE SENSATIONAL, THE AUTHOR EXAMINES THE MANY POSSIBLE LOVES WITH COMPASSION AND EXACTNESS. BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SECOND SEX. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. LIBRARIES WILL HAVE THIS.

151. OF SHAME AND JOY BY SHELDON LORD. TOWER PUBLICATIONS, 509 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK. #29. $.35.

POORLY WRITTEN AND SLIGHTLY SORDID IN SPOTS, BUT VERY UPBEAT TALE OF MADELAINE CARR AND HER LOVE FOR SHEILA PAINE. SHEILA IS A REPRESSED LESBIAN WHO FIGHTS HER FEELINGS THROUGH A KIND OF HARRASSED NYMPHOMANIA. MADELAINE FIGHTS TO WIN HER FROM HER UNHAPPY LIFE AND THE GIRLS END UP TOGETHER WITH A FAIRLY GOOD CHANCE OF A HAPPY FUTURE LIFE. WORTH THE PRICE.

152. HAVELOCK ELLIS: THE SAGE OF SEX BY ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL. NEW YORK, PUTNAM CO., 1960.

THIS EXCELLENT BIOGRAPHY OF THE PIONEER SEX PSYCHOLOGIST

INCLUDES ANALYSIS OF HIS MANY RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN. AMONG THESE WERE OLIVE SCHREINER, THE NOVELIST, WHO CONTRIBUTED TWO VARIANT NOVELS TO THE WORLD, AS WELL AS ELLIS' WIFE, WHO WAS A LESBIAN ALL OF HER ADULT LIFE. THE AUTHOR HANDLES THE WHOLE THING QUITE CLINICALLY BUT ALL OF THE DETAILS ARE PRESENTED VERY FRANKLY. OF INTEREST TO LESBIANA READERS AS WELL AS STUDENTS OF SEX PSYCHOLOGY. PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES WILL HAVE THIS BOOK.

Ann Aldrich Indicts DOB and THE LADDER!!

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Which all began a long time ago with THE LADDER's "Open Letter to Ann Aldrich" published in April, 1958.

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READER'S RESPOND

"It was with increasing amazement that I read: "WHY AM I A LESBIAN", published in the June issue of THE LADDER. And I am convinced that the writers of this 'informative' material are themselves in doubt as to what constitutes a real, genuine, authentic Lesbian. I admit, along with many authorities, that there are, unfortunately, various imitations, many so-called "acquired" homosexuals, both male and female. However, there is a type of Lesbian who cannot be anything but homosexual; and this is the type who, in my opinion, was either born an invert, or was so conditioned very early in her life.

"I am sure that the humblest of Lesbians knows considerably more about being a Lesbian than Dr. Kinsey does, with all due respect to that gentleman and his vast knowledge. But regardless of how many Lesbians one may meet, or speak with, nothing can equate the actual experiences of a homosexual woman. Naturally, one Lesbian cannot speak for the group as a whole; but I feel that it is my privilege to speak for myself and to discredit what I find unbelievable in this recent article. Surely, I cannot be the only one who feels this way.

"To begin with, I would like to consider the emotional angle, which seems to be entirely omitted in this article, "WHY AM I A LESBIAN." I would like to consider a young Lesbian of, say, five years; a child who as yet knows nothing of the sex-act, pregnancy, society, or what have you. This child, if she is a true Lesbian, will be, even at this early age, attracted to other female children, experiencing a strange emotional attachment. She may have little companions of the male sex for whom she may feel a certain affection, but the emotional attachment she feels for little girls (or perhaps just one little girl singled out of the group) will be entirely different. This is the very important emotional angle, which I feel was overlooked in the above-mentioned article.

"This important aspect of homosexuality, the emotional angle,

begins very early, long before any physical tendencies occur; and it continues, increasing in intensity, until the bewildered victim of these strange emotional torments finally realizes what role she must play.

As far as mere physical attraction is concerned, I would say that this article is correct. Perhaps a woman who is apprehensive concerning pregnancy might enjoy sexual experiences with another woman, thereby being able to release all her fears, and relax. Perhaps the dictates of society might even lead two frustrated women into physical intimacy. This certainly must be true in many cases. All of the "reasons" you quoted must have been true, at one time or another, for some women. However, I would hesitate to combine these explanations in an article which attempts clarification of the entire origin of female homosexuality. These pressures you have listed could scarcely create a Lesbian (as one of your writers did point out). Being a Lesbian means considerably more than having a physical need. Being a Lesbian is a delicately balanced condition, which very few understand, including some Lesbians themselves. It inter-

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relates both the emotional and the physical, if it is to be considered genuine.

"I realize that these published replies are all personal, answering the question: "Why are you a Lesbian?"; but I am disappointed, and even dismayed, that not one of these replies gave any cognizance to the basic, fundamental factor comprising Lesbianism itself. These "reasons" that you listed are just that: reasons, superficial explanations. The true Lesbian, when queried, cannot tell you "why" in so many glib phrases. She surely recognizes that she is; but the "why" of it evades her. To illustrate further, ask a heterosexual man "why" he is a man, and you will encounter the identical blank stare that the genuine Lesbian will give you. Ask a heterosexual woman "why" she is a woman, and you will obtain the same result. And while it may be true that these people can uncover physical evidence to support their claims, this is not the evidence we are asking. We are not looking for physical evidence; we are asking "why?" Perhaps the question itself is an unfair one. Perhaps there is not one of us who can really answer "why?" In fact, the true Lesbian should not even consider the "why" of it. It is enough for her that it is. She does not know the answer to "why?", and she cares less. She is a Lesbian, and she enjoys being sincerely what she is. Why? Who cares "why"? In my opinion, the less squirming we Lesbians do, the better for all concerned. Delve if you must; soul-search, if that is your pleasure; but keep it on the level of less torturing subjects. We are. That is "why" enough. Living as we are, without shame, ready to accept our peculiarities along with the rest of humanity, we should find enough happiness to last a little while, anyway. Asking "why" could lead to unhappiness if we pursue this too far, and too deep. "Why" is an unanswerable question.

"But I like what I read on Page 13 of this same issue, June 1960. Georgina Lloyd wrote: 'But I have never been able to cure myself of what I am...a masculine soul, with masculine desires, in a feminine body.' To this statement I would like to add my hearty and sincere 'Amen!'"

Jay Wallace, New York

"Your readers, particularly those interested in the private lives of the literary and artistic great during the last 35 years, will not want to miss Mercedes de Acosta's autobiography, HERE LIES THE HEART, published by Reynal & Co., New York, 1960, for $5.00. It is a fascinating and colorful account of the life of poet and playwright Mercedes de Acosta. Daughter of a wealthy and socially prominent family, Miss de Acosta was on intimate terms with a number of famous and interesting individuals, such as Isadora Duncan, Eva Le Gallienne, Marlene Dietrich, Poppy Kirk, Claire Charles-Roux (Marquise de Forbin), Marie Laurencin, Malvina Hoffman, Alice B. Toklas, and many others. Miss de Acosta writes well, with charm and complete sincerity, of such diverse events as a tender love story between two nuns, which she witnessed as a child, and the mode in dress and mannerism much in vogue right after the First World War. She devotes a large portion of the last half of the book to her long

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intimacy with the enigmatic and bewildering Greta Garbo, and for many this will be the most interesting part of the book. Medium and large public libraries will have this for the most part."

B. C., Kansas

"Naturally the authoress of Lesbian Statement #3 (June, 1960 issue of THE LADDER) doesn't subscribe to THE WELL OF LONELINESS because she is a bi-sexual and no more a spokesman for Lesbianism than many other forms of aberration. Even Dr. Stekel wrote two separate books on the two subjects! She can jump back and forth whenever the kick strikes her, and by God, it's easier to give a bad name to homosexuality than to the hetero side. (Those girls are the death of every Lesbian!) Hers is a frustration complex - she invites punishment from both sides in order to fulfill her masochistic tendencies.

"She states, 'Oddly enough, as a Lesbian I have lifted the veil of repression imposed by society.' This statement only stamps her as a rebel against society. Her 'cause' nullifies itself by this one sentence. We have known many of her kind - they only sample the honey. She does not subscribe to the 'myth' of THE WELL OF LONELINESS because her feelings are not deep enough for it. People such as she are only playing on the surface of the ocean of life, with plenty of life-savers on hand to make certain they will not be dragged down to the bottom or left alone to themselves stranded on a lonely isle."

Y & A, California

For your information, the party to whom you have directed this invective was married, has been divorced for 16 years, has led an exclusively homosexual life for the past 13 years and has been with the same partner for the last 7½ years.

But be that as it may, there are other factors to be considered in any discussion of the bi-sexual. May I refer you to pages 15 through 18 of this issue of THE LADDER. -Ed.

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